



# **Closing the Digital Divide: Transforming Regional Economies and Communities with Information Technology**

*Stewart Marshall, Wallace J. Taylor, Xinghuo Yu*

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Successful strategies and principles for using information technology to transform regional and community economies exist, and they are presented here with clarity and insight in a way that is useful to both practitioners and researchers. Although the communities discussed here range far and wide, from those in Russia to Australia and to Kenya, any community can benefit from enhanced utilization of information and communication technologies.

The ways in which technology can help improve economic, social, cultural, and political conditions are as numerous and various as the communities themselves. In Central Queensland, Australia, community leaders have brought in a high-tech expert advisory system to help them control weed infestation. New Zealand and Australia have pioneered telehealth, the exchange of health care information and the delivery of some services across great distances. In Russia, wiring a community was found to be about more than mere hardware and software; vital to the process was understanding how communities provide access to information technology, how authorities and volunteers can improve computer literacy among citizens, and how connectivity can be extended to greater numbers of people. In some areas of south Asia, nongovernmental organizations have teamed up with local governments to increase access, empowerment, and e-commerce opportunities. These are but a few of the ways this volume contributes to our knowledge base about the impact of technology on economic development.



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